

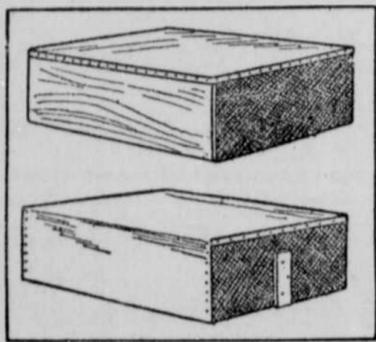
# FARM GARDEN

## PLANT PROTECTORS.

### Devices For Shielding Early Plants From Frost, Winds and Bugs.

Get your plant protectors ready, for there will be little time to do so later on. T. Greiner gives designs and descriptions in Farm and Fireside for some useful homemade devices for protecting early plants from frost and cold winds and from bugs.

First is the simple box frame, a box without top or bottom, say a foot square and four to six inches high. A



BOX WITH MUSLIN TOP—MUSLIN COVER WITH END BOARDS.

square piece of cloth or netting may be tacked over the top. A similar device is made of stiff paper, with a piece of cheesecloth sewed or pasted right over a square opening cut into the top, the sides being held down by pieces of wire bent in double pin shape. For another device a piece of netting may be tacked in two end boards, each end board being provided with a small sharpened stake (nailed on the outside), which when pushed into the ground will hold the end boards in place, with the cloth stretched tightly between them over the plants. Even a large piece of cloth or netting and a few sticks will do the business. We can take some pieces of willow twigs or other pliable wood and stick a couple of them crosswise into the ground in the form of a bow over the top of plants or a single plant and place the piece of cloth over this frame, holding the edges down by banking a little soil up over them.



WILLOW TWIGS AND MUSLIN.

We may simply push one or more little sticks slantingly into the ground and over the plant or plants and cover with netting, or the netting may be simply placed directly over the plants in loose folds. Cheesecloth may be considered preferable to ordinary mosquito netting. The latter is rather coarse and would not prove an effective barrier to thrips and other small insects that might do damage. All these devices are simple and perhaps as effective as any more elaborate or more costly ones.

## FARMERS' INSTITUTES.

### Some Things They Are Accomplishing—The Independent Institute.

The demand for farmers' institutes is genuine when local communities are willing to pay all expenses in case the state is unable to grant their requests, says Alva Agee in National Stockman. In the first week of January I attended two such meetings in Indiana while on my way to Minnesota. The first one was at Carthage, and it has not been my privilege to be present at a more enthusiastic meeting anywhere this

season. There is a sufficient number of the Friends at Carthage to remind one constantly of towns in Chester county, Pa. Evidences of prosperity are on every hand. The last few years have been exceptionally profitable ones in the corn belt, and the farmers are very glad that they are on earth.

At this institute we had Mr. S. F. McMahan and Mrs. Virginia Meredith, two veteran institute instructors of the state. Mr. McMahan probably knows as much about corn as is known, and that means a great deal. It has been a revelation to me to learn how thoroughly these breeders of corn have studied and developed this grain. They are after an ear of corn that is so formed that it contains a high percentage of grain that is rich in protein, high in vitality and very prolific. That means deep, wedge shaped, thick grains, with big germs, all placed on a cob that holds its thickness to the tip and that is covered with grain to the very tip. There are states farther east whose corn growers would be pleased and profited by the information Mr. McMahan has about our great American cereal.

Mrs. Meredith is a farmer and a breeder of Shorthorn cattle whose reputation extends over many states. She has been successful because she has ability and a love for her work. From her example we do not infer that women should or should not turn to farm management for a livelihood. All depends upon the individual. We do learn, however, that if an individual has ability and natural inclination that person may win in practical farming, whether man or woman.

The other independent institute was at Pittsboro, Ind., in the corn belt, where hogs have been adding to the wealth of the people. Many ladies attended the meeting, and the institute committee arranged early in the season to secure Mrs. J. W. Bates, one of the well known Indiana workers, to discuss topics of special interest to housekeepers. The interest of the people in all subjects on the programme was of the sort that should cause all speakers to do their best work.

### Ostrich Feathers.

In each wing of an ostrich twenty-six white plumes grow to maturity every eight months. Seventy-five short feathers besides are plucked for tips from each wing. Sixty-five of the tail feathers have commercial value. The female ostrich lays seventy eggs a year.

### Plowing Machines.

So long ago as 1618 David Ramsey and Thomas Wildgosse took out a patent for engines and machinery to plow ground without horses.

### Korea.

There are at present about 15,000 Japanese settlers in Korea. In the third century after Christ that country belonged to Japan, having been conquered by the Empress Jingo. In the years 1594 to 1598 Korea again was subject to Japan.

### Tobacco.

Tobacco was taken to Europe by the Spaniards early in the sixteenth century and was introduced into England by Raleigh in 1555.

### To Make Palms Thrive.

A few pieces of hoof parings which horseshoers pare off the hoof before shoeing horses will make palms thrive luxuriantly. Simply poke the parings well down in the soil at any time of the year. Horseshoers give away the parings for the asking.

### Finger Prints.

Finger prints for the identification of children have been used in Chinese founding asylums since the eleventh century.

## AX HANDLES.

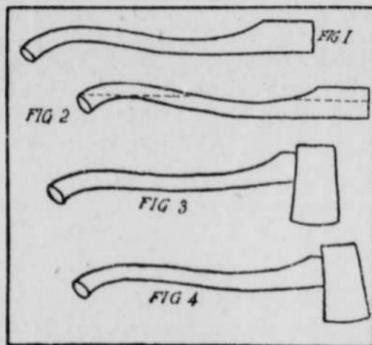
### Heart or Sap Wood—Curved or Straight—Hanging the Ax.

When buying an ax handle always select one that is made entirely from the sap wood or the heart wood, but never one that is made partly of each, for it will split along the line of union. Handles made from sap wood are more elastic and better for chopping, and a man will not tire or get sore so quickly when using one, says an Orange Judd Farmer correspondent.

I prefer those made from the heart wood for splitting, although they are not so durable. The proper length and curve of the handle depend upon the habit and method of chopping of the user. With a long handle a man will strike a much harder blow, but with a short handle he will strike oftener, so there is practically no difference in the work accomplished.

The curve, too, depends upon the habit of the user. A curved handle has no advantage over the one that is perfectly straight. Most people prefer the curved because they are accustomed to its use. As a rule, the straight handle is more durable. The size of the handle depends upon the muscular development of the user. If it is too small it will cramp the fingers, and if too large it will lame the hands and wrists.

If one will examine the end of a piece of wood he will see that it is made of layers, each layer representing the growth of one year. Wood splits much more easily along these lines than across them; hence when



AX HANDLES AND AXES.

selecting an ax handle always choose one in which the layers are parallel with the line of force, as shown in Fig. 1. If they are at right angles, as in Fig. 2, a few days' use will cause the handle to split along the dotted lines shown. The difference in quality in this respect is so marked that many dealers sort their handles and make the price of one about double that of the other.

In hanging an ax considerable attention should be paid to the kind of work which is to be done. For small wood hang an ax pointing in, as shown in Fig. 3. For very large trees hang it squarely across or at right angles to the handle, and for splitting, especially block wood, hang it out according to Fig. 4. This gives one a chance to strike a heavy blow squarely across the block, using the whole bit of the ax, and without making a tiresome bend of the back with every blow. The relative position of the blade and handle may be changed by inserting a small wedge in the eye of the ax, either above or below the handle, as occasion may require.

### Alfalfa in Western Nebraska.

As yet alfalfa is a new thing to a large percentage of the stockmen of Cherry county, but the acreage increases every season. J. H. Batchelor, a big stockman, seeded forty acres to alfalfa a year ago last May, cut three times during the season and got a ton to the acre each time. He believes alfalfa growing will be one of the important factors of the live stock business

of western Nebraska within the next few years. In speaking of his venture Mr. Batchelor says: "The first essential to its success is loose soil. Those who have tried it find that it thrives on blue stem ground and gives the best of satisfaction. When a ranchman gets three tons of feed off one acre of ground he is making two blades of grass grow where one grew before and more. Those who have grown it are more than pleased with results and predict that it will cut a big figure in the range countries in time. As a result of my experience I am going to break up a hundred acres for alfalfa next spring. I am going to investigate methods of seeding, and if I find that it can be successfully grown on sod I will seed the ground right after it is turned."—Orange Judd Farmer.

### Echoes From the Press.

When scalding a hog put it in a cask or trough and throw three or four handfuls of air slaked lime over it, then put in your boiling water. It will make the bristles fly, says an Orange Judd Farmer correspondent.

Cannibals of Africa are said to prefer pork to human meat. Savage practices have thus been checked by cultural methods, and the pig attracts attention as the greatest civilizer of the age.

Fourteen ounces of pins welded into a solid mass were found in a cow's stomach at one of the Chicago packing houses. That cow must have been full of good points.

This going to a farm for a living is serious business, with the chances against any one who thinks that farming is a soft job or an easy business to learn.

Farmers in sentiment occupy a middle ground between capital and labor, with little sympathy for the method of either.

Pure food laws should not be objectionable to the honest citizen, while the practices of the dishonest class should be checked by legislation.

Farmers who fail to read regularly think in ruts.

### Curious Candle Custom.

There is a singular custom in the Manchester (England) cathedral—viz, the lighting of twelve candles on Christmas eve and extinguishing one every night until the Epiphany.

### Human Hair.

The roots of the hair penetrate the skin about one-twelfth of an inch. Hair is very strong. A single hair will bear a weight of about 1,150 grains.

### Repotting Palms.

In repotting palms put a good sized piece of broken flowerpot (the common porous kind) in the bottom of the new pot, covering the drainage hole. This makes drainage slow and retains the moisture.

### The Korean Flag.

The Korean flag is white, and in the center is a design about the size of a football in red and blue, looking very much like huge intertwined comma marks. On the top, bottom and sides are short lines of dots and dashes, reminding one of the Morse code alphabet.

### Descartes' Reply.

A gay marquis said to Descartes, "Do you philosophers eat dainties?" He replied, "Do you think that God made good things only for fools?"

### Cabs in Russia.

In no European country are cabs so cheap as in Russia, for there is no tariff at all. All trade is a matter of haggling, and it is just the same with cabs. In no city in Europe can you drive so far at so small a cost, and in no city can you be so unmercifully fleeced if you do not know the system. But to work the system takes time.